

TRUE PLAN AND MEANS

FOR OBTAINING

RELIGIOUS REVIVALS.

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THE
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RELIGIOUS REVIVALS.

BY

JOHN G. MARSHALL.

*"What is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my Word like
as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock
in pieces."—Jer. xxiii, 28, 29.*

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THE TRUE PLAN AND MEANS. ETC.

"Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

"Wilt thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"—Ps. lxxxv. 6.

"Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts."—Mat. iii. 7.

THE first of the above passages of Holy Scripture, like several others, may be said to comprehend nearly the whole of experimental or Spiritual religion, as distinguished from that which is merely ceremonial or formal and heartless. It also shows the absolute necessity for the operation of two distinct powers for securing man's regeneration and eternal salvation and happiness; the one power being *divine*, the other *human* and *personal*. Both, in regular order, will be here exhibited and explained, in the light of the inspired Scriptures. These infallible oracles most positively and repeatedly assert that, every human being is, by nature, in a state of alienation from God, and at enmity with His will and law. The Lord God has declared, as we see in Gen. viii. 21.—"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Again, in Jer. xvii.—"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." "Behold," says the inspired Psalmist—"I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity;" and the spiritually instructed Paul declares "We, all"—including Jew and Gentile Christians—"were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others." As God is a perfectly holy and just being, He cannot look on sin but with extreme aversion and displeasure; and He has solemnly and repeatedly declared in His Word, that none can possess his favor here, or enter into his Kingdom of glory and happiness hereafter, but those who are righteous and holy. Hence arises the necessity for such a thorough change in the nature and character of every human being, that it is described by our Lord as being "born

again," and he has declared, in the most impressive manner, that "unless a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."—(John iii). In several passages of Scripture the change is being described as being made "new creatures," by the Holy Spirit, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Salvation," in the text, of itself implies that there is an impending evil, from which escape and a state of safety must be secured. It is the immortal spirit of man, naturally alienated from God, and involved in guilt, which is thereby exposed to the awful danger of falling under the final condemnation and eternal punishment of its holy and righteous Judge.

The language of the text, and of many other parts of Scripture, disclose the only way and means by which those dreadful consequences may be avoided : and the divine favour and eternal salvation secured. In proceeding to treat of those means, consideration may first be given to those words of the text :—"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Although these divine operations are mentioned in the latter clause of the text, yet they are, in due order, and of necessity, the first in actual employment, for the Scriptures emphatically and repeatedly declare that, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,"—that they who are spiritually born again, and thereby become "the children of God," are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and that it is the Lord who "*quickens*" those who are "dead in trespasses and sins." (See Ps. ii ; John i ; Eph. ii). In several other passages the change is described as being made "new creatures" through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But from these truths on the subject there is no ground or reason for concluding, as some have presumptuously said, that we must *silently* and *quietly* wait until the Lord, in some powerful and irresistible manner, operates in or *upon* us, and brings us into the requisite state of conversion, faith and salvation. There is not a word or intimation in the Scriptures to give the least countenance to such a thought or opinion, but it is as contrary to their whole tenor and expressions, as it is *irrational* and absurd. There are various means and dispensations by which our gracious God, (who wills the salvation of all,)—incites or allures sinners to abandon their evil ways and seek His mercy and forgiveness. The text says : He works *in* them "to will

and to do." He does it with all in the requisite degree by that light of conscience and of reason which, as Scripture declares, "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Also with all who possess the Scriptures, or sit under the ministry of the Word, who are thereby warned, invited, and urged to seek that salvation, and instructed as to the way and means of obtaining it. He also frequently works in them by His spirit, for our Lord has said of that spirit—"He will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." That gracious spirit often applies His written Word, with quickening and alarming power, to the *conscience* and *understanding*, creating, alternately fears, desires, and hopes, regarding personal salvation. Providential dispensations, by severe bodily complaints,—by dangers and deliverances,—deaths of relatives or friends, are also divinely made to produce the same designed awakening and salutary effects. Merely looking on a dead body, or attendance at a funeral, will frequently give rise to feelings of alarm; or, at least, of serious consideration and reflection as to a personal interest in a future state of existence and of eternal consequences. All these are the workings and appliances of the wise and benevolent author of our being, to save sinners of every class and degree of guiltiness, from eternal misery, and restore them to His favor and image, and make them happy in time and eternity. He has made rich and ample provision in the Gospel of His grace for every human being to obtain those blessings, as the following and numerous other portions of His Word clearly testify: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."—"Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die." "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved;" "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—(Ezek. xxxiii; John iii; 2 Pet iii). "He (Christ) is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," "Who gave Himself a ransom for all"—that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man—(1 John, ii; Heb. ii). But the Lord will not compel sinners to accept his salvation, for He has created mankind as free or voluntary beings; and therefore responsible to him as their lawgiver and Judge, as to obedience or disobedience to His imparted inward light, or scripturally-revealed instructions and

commands. To employ the words addressed to his people of Israel, when about to enter Canaan, as seen in Deut. xxx, he now, virtually, says to all, under his present dispensation :—"See, I have set before thee, this day, life and good, death and evil, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

He graciously works, however, by various means and influences, to incline men to depart from the evil, and choose the good, and obey it. In pity and love, he excites fears and desires, as his wisdom sees to be needful; enlightens the understanding, to see the way of life and salvation, as revealed in the Scriptures; breathes on the affections of the heart, and incites and stimulates to the duties and exercises of prayer,—to a confiding faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, a diligent examination of the truths of revelation, and serious meditation thereon; to earnest watchfulness, and endeavours for improvement in all that is good, and avoidance of all evil;—and to the employment of other requisite and available means, for obtaining forgiveness of all past transgressions, and a spiritual evidence of divine acceptance; and for grace, wisdom, and strength, to persevere in the enjoined course of faith and loving obedience. If the Christian convert, so divinely stimulated and assisted, does indeed thus faithfully pursue his religious course, his gracious God and Saviour, according to numerous Scripture promises, will never forsake him, but will continue to grant him supplies of grace, fully sufficient for every season of temptation, trial, or suffering, to which he may be exposed, or work of obedience to which he may be called. "If ye abide in me,"—says our Lord,—“and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”—"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."—"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." (John xv; Rev. ii.) The text declares that God "worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" and the Scriptures fully show, that "good pleasure" to be, that they should be saved from all sin, and its ruinous consequences, be made *holy*, and finally admitted into his everlasting Kingdom of glory and happiness.

Being, as described, divinely quickened, instructed, and assisted, the text gives the command to every seeking and believing soul:

"Work out your own Salvation."

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These words mean, of course, a *co-working* with those divine influences and operations mentioned in the text, for as no man can *quicken his own soul*, so none can, merely of his own will and efforts, maintain that divinely imparted spiritual life. He needs constant supplies of the bread and water of life, and, on his own part, renewed exercises of faith in the atoning sacrifice and propitiation of his gracious Redeemer, and fervent and repeated supplications for the influence of his Spirit, to further *quicken* and *sustain*, and to enable him successfully to "fight the good fight of faith," and constantly press forward, as Scripturally commanded in all the exercises and duties of the Christian life. The Holy Scriptures form the only true and safe source and foundation of all *religious* and truly *moral truth, wisdom, and righteousness*. To these infallible oracles, therefore, every seeker of salvation and Christian believer must constantly look, in every stage of their course, for instruction and guidance, as to the whole of their religious faith and conduct, for they are declared to be "given by the inspiration of God;" and to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—(2 Tim. iii). The inspired and devoted Psalmist has said—"Oh how love I Thy law—it is my meditation all the day."—"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."—(Ps. cxix). The Scriptures exhort and command every professor of our Holy religion to "repent" and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" to "forsake the foolish, and go in the way of understanding;" "cease to do evil and learn to do well;"—to "pray always, and not faint," resting on the written promises, and exercising faith for their personal fulfillment, as divinely seen to be needed; for it is declared that, "without faith it is impossible to please God;" and "he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him." And further, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."—(See Heb. xi; James i.) Every such professor must also constantly, as scripturally exhorted and commanded, exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, by frequent and fervent supplication, seek to receive out of His fullness, every grace of the Holy Spirit needed for direction, strength, and comfort, and for the ful-

filment of every practical duty: bearing in mind, also, and striving, through grace, to advance in fervent and grateful obedience to the further divine commands relating to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might."—"Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High."—"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy steps."—(Deut. vi; Ps. 1; Prov. iii.) "Putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation."—"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me," says the Saviour.—"If ye love me keep my commandments."—"He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."—(Thes. v; Math. ii; John xvi; Heb. v.)

The Christian believer, in working out his salvation, as commanded in the text, must also bear in mind, and exercise the following and all other scripturally enjoined graces; and fulfil the duties regarding others. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" "That which is altogether just thou shalt follow;" "Be ye, therefore, merciful as your Father also is merciful."—Math. xxii; Deut. xvi; Luke vi). "Speak evil of no man;" "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven;" "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."—(Tit. iii; Luke vi; Eph. v). "Let your conversation be without covetousness;" "Be ye kind one to another;" "As we have, therefore, opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;" "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—(Phil. i; Eph. vi; Gal. vi; Rom. xii). "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness;" "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" "Abstain from all appearance of evil;" "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven."—(Col. iii; Math. vii; 1 Thes. v; Math. v.)

There are also, in the Scriptures, numerous instructions and commands respecting the various relations of life: of husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, ministers and people, and between Christian brethren and others, all of which are to be duly observed and obeyed.

Every such seeker and worker for salvation is also Scripturally

exhorted and commanded, to seek and exercise the following and all other personal graces and duties :—" Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation ;" " Search the Scriptures ;" " Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."—(Mat. xxvii ; John v ; Col. iii.) " Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves ;" " Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof ;" " Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile ;" " Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ;" (2 Cor. xiii ; Ps. xxxiv ; Rom. xiii.) " Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering ;" " Let love be without dissimulation."—" Add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity." (Col. iii ; Rom. xii ; 2 Heb. i.)

The Christian convert must not, for any time or cause, suspend or relax the exercise and performance of any of the foregoing Scripturally enjoined graces and duties, for the text says his salvation is to be—

Worked out ;

evidently meaning, that he is to be constantly employed in most earnest efforts, until that salvation is, through divine grace and influence, fully secured. He must not be like the man, who as our Lord in similitude has said, " Having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is not fit for the kingdom of God ;" nor like him who without counting the cost, begins to build, and " after he shall have laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all that behold him begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish."—(Luke xvi.) In all ages of the Church there have been not a few, but many such cowardly and unfaithful professors of Christianity, who, through fear of persecution or reproach, ridicule or contempt, or through ambition, the love of gain, " the lust of the flesh, the pride of life," or other worldly and corrupt desires and motives, after having for a time, as Scripturally described,— " escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, and the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, for it had

been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”—(2 Pet. ii.) In order to avoid such a fearful end, let every professor of our holy Christianity, constantly bear in mind and obey these inspired warnings and injunctions:—“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;” “Abide in me, and I in you;” * * “for without me ye can do nothing;” “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered:” “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.”—(1 Cor. x; John xv; Heb. x.) “Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;” “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—(2 Pet. i; Rev. ii.)

The text also sets forth the urgent motives, and the degrees of earnestness, energy and activity, with which the believer is to prosecute the vitally important and comprehensive work. These are seen in the words:—

“With fear and trembling.”

A learned divine and commentator, in remarking on these words, has explained them and given counsel in the following terms:—“Considering the *difficulty* of the *work*, and the *danger* of *miscarriage*, if you do not watch, pray, and continually depend on God, your enemies will surprise you, and your light and life will be become extinct: and then consider what an awful account you must give to Him whose spirit ye have grieved, and of whose glory ye have come short.”

The translated words “fear and trembling,” do not mean a fear and tremor that the gracious and faithful God, or the compassionate and unchangeable Saviour will, without constraining cause, withhold the assistance of grace, or other requisite means for the progress and completion of the commanded and desired salvation; for the divine will as expressed in Scripture is,—“that the world through Christ might be saved:” and the loving Redeemer who invited, warned, and counselled the hardened sinners of Jerusalem, and wept over them, because they would not repent and believe on Him for salvation, has still been bearing with sinners, and calling and restoring prodigals, and seeking and bringing back to the fold the wanderers from His flock. Neither do the words mean servile fears, and severe and distressing agitations, proceeding from a spirit of *bondage*, for they

whom "the Son makes free," are "free indeed" from such a degraded and unhappy spirit. With reference to the great and glorious Majesty of the Universe, those words mean a gracious and reverential fear of offending such an infinitely wise, holy, and beneficent God and Saviour. There are numerous passages of Scripture, inculcating and requiring such a reverential and becoming fear, by all the inhabitants of the earth; and it is perfectly consistent with the equally enjoined and appropriate emotions and duties towards him, of love, faith and confidence, and every other principle and feeling of homage and adoration, as well as of cheerful and unreserved obedience. The following are some of the Scripture exhortations and injunctions to such a reverential fear:—"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him;" "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him;" "Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." This was said by the Lord Jesus to His disciples. Further,—*"Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire."*—(Deut. vi; Luke xii; Heb. xii.) *"Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men."*—(2 Cor. v.) It might be with good effect if ministers of religion would occasionally preach from some of those, or similar texts. It might serve to alarm some bold and presumptuous sinners, and afford a check and caution to some sincere and weak persons, who, in prayer, indulge in an unbecoming freedom of speech and manner, and too frequently repeat the sacred name. As regards the believer's own fears or apprehensions concerning his spiritual state and prospects, there are also numerous Scriptural warnings and directions. He is commanded to "Commune with his own heart;" to "examine himself;" to "walk circumspectly;" and is cautioned:—"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," and to "fear lest having a promise of entering into rest, he should come short of it."—(Ps. iv; 2 Cor. xiii; 1 Cor. x; Heb. iv.) All these commands, exhortations, and directions, are as obligatory now, on every seeker of salvation, as they were in any previous age of our holy Christianity. It is, therefore, at the peril of their failure of securing salvation, and of enduring eternal misery, to neglect or disobey those divine warnings and instructions. But it too plainly appears to be the melancholy fact, that, in the present day, vast numbers of professed believers in

Christianity, both *within* as well as *outside* of church membership, are practically disregarding them, by partially or entirely failing to employ the commanded means and efforts towards working out, as divinely enjoined, that needed salvation, although the requisite grace to assist them, if sincerely and faithfully desired and sought, will be readily and fully afforded. That neglect and disobedience are *now, comparatively*, more blameable and dangerous than in any previous age of Christianity, inasmuch as there are far more means and facilities afforded towards obtaining that salvation, by the multiplication and free use of the Scriptures, increased evangelical preaching of the Word, the existence and operations of numerous religious associations of various descriptions, Sabbath schools, Bible classes, institutions specially for the instruction and benefit of the youth of both sexes, and many other direct or auxiliary means for imparting Scripture truth, and inculcating and promoting Christian morality. These favorable means and appliances manifestly bring every professor of Christianity under an additional weight of claim and obligation to give his utmost diligence and efforts to secure his salvation, for as our Lord has declared:—"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;" "and unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, (meaning hath not improved that which he had) shall be taken away even that which he hath;" and he added the awful doom:—"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—(Luke xii; Math. xxv.)

CHIEF HINDRANCES TO SALVATION.

It may here be well to mention some of the causes which prevent those unfaithful professors from seeking and finally securing the needed and offered salvation. The two principal causes of the present low state of religious faith and conduct are manifestly these:—The almost universal desire and ardent endeavors for acquiring worldly gain, and a craving desire and pursuit of the various modes and scenes of *sensual* gratifications and amusements. With the adult male population the first of these causes—that of gain—greatly predominates, producing in the higher and middle orders, especially in political circles, various immoral and corrupt practices, and in society generally many forms of fraud and demoralization. A very

large proportion of these lovers of gain are also votaries of sensual indulgences in various ways, especially in the use of intoxicating drinks, that certain preventive of pious emotions and truly religious motives and conduct, and in every way the most prolific of evil, and of present and eternal misery. They either will not search and learn, or wilfully disregard the inspired Scripture injunctions:—"Labour not to be rich;" "Take heed, (said the Lord Jesus) and beware of covetousness."—(Prov. xxiii; Luke xii.) "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition;" "In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous * * * lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" "Serving divers lusts and pleasures."—(1 Tim. vi; 2 Tim. iii.)

Very large proportions of adult female professors of Christianity—heads of families—some of them in Church membership, if not affected with the like spirit for gain, are equally, or even more involved in the desires and gratifications of scenes and modes of pleasure and amusement; and further, exhibit a weakness and worldliness in a superabounding display of various costly and sumptuous mansion furniture, and numerous decorations of glass, porcelain, expensive pictures, and other *baubles of vanity*, making their apartments, under a religious view "*chambers of imagery*," somewhat similar to those of idolatry, described by the prophet Ezekiel. These persons do not regard, as they ought to do, the express Divine injunctions—"Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world, * * * for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." "Keep yourselves from idols."—(1 John.) On this last text a learned and celebrated divine and commentator has thus written:—"That is a person's idol, from which happiness is sought, whether it be pleasure, wealth, fame, a fine house, superb furniture, splendid equipage, medals, curiosity, books, titles, human friendship, or any earthly or heavenly thing, God the supreme good only excepted." On the words "lust of the eye," he has further written:—"Inordinate desires after *finery* of every kind, gaudy dress, superb furniture * * * trappings and decorations of all sorts." A further and most prevalent mode of vanity and folly and hindrance to conversion and salva-

tion in the female sex, is ornamental and showy apparel, varieties of *jewellery* and *flowery* appendages, somewhat like the women of Israel, whom the Lord, by His prophet Isaiah, so severely condemned for their indulgence in that form of display of pride and vanity. Not only does this hindrance to true spiritual conversion prevail universally among the youthful and unmarried portion of the sex, but it seems to be almost equally predominant in the *matronly circles*, as well *within* as outside of Church membership. Now the Lord, by His inspired Apostle, has repeatedly commanded—"That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, or putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price."—(1 Tim. ii; 1 Pet. iii.)

These other forms of sin and folly, and hindrances to true conversion, especially applying to the young, must also be mentioned: Attendance on vain, frivolous and sensual scenes and exhibitions, reading works of romance and fiction, often containing profane expressions and irreligious sentiments; also what is generally called *gossiping*, or *idle and unedifying talk*, at times *defamatory*, all which use of speech is Scripturally prohibited and condemned. If such male and female professed seekers of regeneration and salvation think that they can find and retain these inestimable blessings, and still continue in the indulgence of those divinely forbidden sins, and worldly and sensual gratifications and vanities, or any of them, they are under an awful *delusion*, which, if not dispelled by enlightening and saving grace, will end in their eternal misery. The divine Saviour and Redeemer, as Scripturally declared, came, and suffered, and died, to save his people, not *in* but "*from their sins*;" to "redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people," "denying and avoiding all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (See Mat. i; Tit. ii; Cor. vii.) And he has plainly declared, "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me;" "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;" "Make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;" "but, as strangers and pilgrims,

abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul;" "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but are of the world;" and "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption."—(Luke ix & xiv; 1 John ii; Gal. vi.) These, and similar Scripture injunctions, are of the same binding authority, for constant observance and obedience by all candidates for salvation, as the very first doctrines and precepts of our holy Christianity; and their disregard, and non-observance if persisted in, will as certainly cause a failure of salvation as any other forms of disobedience and sin. Such unfaithful seekers and professors may continue to attend all revival meetings and other religious services, but their transient desires and emotions will be as the "morning cloud and the early dew;" and after all their self-kindled fire and sparks, they will, if not divinely rescued finally, as declared in Scripture, "lie down in sorrow." The addresses of hundreds of Moodys and Sankeys and other *Revivalists* will be lost upon them. With vast numbers in all the religious denominations, judging by their conduct, there seems to be, at present, a very wide and dangerous *misconception* as to the nature of true spiritual Christianity, as exhibited in the Scriptures, and of genuine conversion and holiness of *heart and life*; and also as to the requisite degrees of earnestness and persevering diligence and efforts to acquire and retain those essential graces and blessings. It is partly owing to this misconception, that the desires and efforts to obtain heavenly treasures, and for exhibiting the conduct so requisite in forming the true Christian character, are so very generally feeble and fluctuating. The misconception is, doubtless, chiefly owing to the neglect of prayerfully and diligently searching the sacred scriptures and meditating thereon. From these inspired oracles *alone* can any perfectly true and reliable knowledge be obtained, as to the real standard of our holy religion, both as to faith and practice; and as regards the persevering earnestness and activity for procuring the graces and holiness which constitute the Kingdom of God in the heart and soul, and are so essential for admission into the future state of eternal glory and happiness. Unhappily, those careless and self-deceived seekers and professors, neglect to obey the divine commands for the frequent and attentive perusal of those infallible oracles, and to regulate their desires, affections and conduct by that perfect directory and guide. They seem to be content to de-

rive their slight and superficial knowledge of Scripture truth chiefly or entirely at second hand, from the teachings of the pulpit and other public religious addresses and instructions. They ought to know,—as the Scriptures clearly and repeatedly declare,—that they are strictly required *personally* and *constantly* to search those divine revelations for all religious instruction and guidance; and are solemnly warned, that according to *obedience* or *disobedience* to their requisitions and commands, they will finally be judged, and either acquitted or condemned. It will, therefore, be their true wisdom, to constantly regard and obey the following and numerous other divine instructions and commands on the subject:—"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."—A blessing is pronounced on the godly and righteous man, because "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night;" "Blessed is the man that heareth me, (wisdom—the Word) watching daily at my gates, waiting daily at the posts of my doors;" "Search the Scriptures."—Ps. cix; Ps. i; Prov. viii; John v.) "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;" "From a child," says St. Paul to Timothy "thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Scripture declares of the Divine Ruler,—“He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth;” “He that rejecteth me, saith the Lord Jesus, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”—(Eph. vi; 2 Tim. iii; Ps. xlv; John xii.)

In the Revival meetings alluded to in a previous page, applications are frequently made by, or on behalf, of persons having some concern or desire for *conversion* or attainment of *spiritual blessings*. This, certainly has Scriptural sanction, but unless such persons are endeavoring to abandon all their sins, and vain and foolish thoughts and ways, and are employing earnest and persevering private prayer, for thorough spiritual conversion, and for obtaining Christian graces; and are endeavouring to observe a religious and righteous conduct, they are, to say the least,—acting with great inconsistency, if not hypocrisy, and have no good ground or reason to expect, that the prayers of *others*, will certainly avail to procure them the desired spiritual blessings.

It may here be useful to offer some suggestions as to the

BEST MEANS FOR OBTAINING A GENERAL REVIVAL OF TRUE
CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CONDUCT.

The principal *human* means to be employed towards obtaining such a revival, are those which the Scriptures describe and command, as to every individual who is sincerely seeking salvation—namely: repentance, and abandoning all ways of ungodliness and unrighteousness, vanity and folly, and earnest and persevering private prayer, with the confiding hope and faith of obtaining the desired spiritual blessings, on the ground, and for the sake of the atoning sacrifice and propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Also persevering diligence in searching and solemnly meditating on the Sacred Scriptures, accompanied with prayer for spiritual enlightenment and instruction, as to the true Christian faith, and the pious and pure conduct therein described and enjoined, and with earnest and constant endeavours to act in all things and ways, as those divine oracles prescribe. Regular attendance on the public faithful and Evangelical Ministry of the sacred Word must also be observed. Other Scripturally enjoined or sanctioned means might be named, but those just mentioned are the most important, and are essentially requisite for obtaining the needed Spiritual deliverance, and present and final salvation. If the people generally, of any country or community, will faithfully regard and obey those divine requirements, they will assuredly experience the inestimable blessing of a revival of truly Scriptural and spiritual religion, for He is faithful who has thus promised.—“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy;” “Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts;”—“Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth;”—(Prov. xxviii; Jer. iii; Zech. i.) “Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you;”—“Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls;” “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”—(Prov. i; Jer. vi; Math. xxi.)

Without a compliance with the commands to repent and turn from

the ways of transgression, and yielding obedience to the other Scriptural requisitions and injunctions above mentioned there can be no well grounded hope, of any very general and permanent revival of true spiritual religion, as the result of public meetings held for obtaining that blessing. Such meetings may, and generally do produce partial and transient revivals of mere *desires* and *excited feelings* without any real and enduring spiritual improvement in heart and life. Our God and the Lord Jesus Christ *change not*. The abandonment of all sin and vanity, and fleshly lusts and worldliness, are *now* as divinely and imperatively commanded, and *personal faith, righteousness, and holiness*, as strictly required, as in any previous age, both with reference to this life, and the future state of glory and happiness.

The divine warnings, instructions and commands, are still in full force:—Here are some of them, which it will be well for the multitudes of lovers of pleasure and vanities and double minded and inconsistent professors to learn and obey:—"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish;" "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works:" "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say."—(Luke xiii; Rev. ii; Luke vi.) "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving;" "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls; but be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls;" "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."—(Col. iv; Jas. i; 1 Pet. ii.)

The writer may fairly be excused, if not indeed fully justified in offering some suggestions and remarks, respecting the general style of the public religious exhortations and teachings in the present day, addressed to the unconverted and careless. These ministrations, nearly altogether, consist in exhortations to come to Christ, and often, with the rather ambiguous or uncertain words,—"*just as you are,*" without any warning or call to forsake the ways and scenes of sin and vanity. There is no Scriptural authority to sanction such a style of limited address to the *worldly* and *unconverted*. All the instructions and exhortations by the inspired and faithful teachers, under the preceding dispensation, as shown in the Scripture include not only a turning unto God, but an immediate forsaking of all sinful principles, passions, and practices; and Christianity demands the same. These two duties must be concurrent. Neither of them,

singly observed, will avail to obtain the promised blessings, indispensable for a scriptural and sound conversion. The Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for the Saviour, proclaimed the new dispensation, by exhorting the people :—" Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and bring forth, therefore, fruit meet for repentance." The Saviour also employed the words,—“ Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” It is said of the twelve apostles, whom our Lord sent forth, that, “they went out and preached, that men should repent.”—(Mark vi.) The zealous and faithful Paul declared, as seen in Acts xx, that he testified both to the Jews and the Greeks,—“ Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus-Christ ;” and to “do works meet for repentance.” Through all ages since, the same method has been employed, by all Christian teachers, truly enlightened in the gospel plan of salvation, and faithful to the Divine charge, to “rightly divide the Word of truth,” and “declare the whole counsel of God.” The invitations and promises of scripture to the unconverted, for seeking and obtaining salvation are addressed to the “weary and heavy laden” with their sins ; to those who are “thirsty,” to “come to the waters ;” and to those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness.” They are not for those who have not formed, or manifested any intention to forsake all irreligious and unrighteous ways, and practise the *self denial*, and observe the *integrity* and *purity* of conduct Scripturally enjoined. That eminent Minister of Christ,—Rev. John Wesley, so deeply learned in divine truth, as revealed in the Scriptures, in remarking on the conduct of those who hold forth to all, *indiscriminately*, the promises of the gospel, has thus written :—"They know and use but one medicine, whatever be the cause of the distemper," They preach the Gospel, as they call it.—To give *comfort* is the *single* point at which they aim : in order to which, they say many soft and tender things, concerning the love of God to poor helpless sinners, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Now, this is *quackery* indeed, and that of the worst sort. It is hard to speak of these ‘daubers with untempered mortar,’ these *promise-mongers*, as they deserve. They do, in effect, make the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

* * * * The ordinary method of God is, to convict sinners by the *law*, and *that only*. The gospel is not the means which God hath ordained, or which our Lord himself used for this end. We have no

authority in Scripture for using it thus, nor any ground to think it will prove effectual. "They that are whole," as our Lord himself observes, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." It is absurd to offer Christ to them whose heart is whole, having never yet been broken. In addressing such persons, the first effort should be to show them that they are really *diseased*, and in need of a *cure*, before proposing, or applying the healing gospel remedy. Our Lord's sermon on the Mount was, nearly throughout, of a *legal* and *preceptive* character.

With reference to Special Meetings and services, to obtain Revivals of Religion, to which allusion has previously been made, it will always be needful and proper, in conducting the exercises and delivering addresses, in such meetings, to apply suitable and awakening passages of the inspired Word, with faithful and pointed exhortations to the abandonment of all sinful and vain and sensual ways and works,—all contaminating associations and scenes; with entreaties to frequent private prayer,—searching the Scriptures, and the observance of other religious means. Such a course of procedure in conducting such special meetings, as well as in all public religious teaching, is in strict accordance with the Scripture injunctions:—"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts," &c.—"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" "Cease to do evil; learn to do well;" "Search the Scriptures;" "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation;" "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls;" "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation;" "If the righteous scarcely be saved, (or with great effort and difficulty) where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear;" "Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil;" "Fear Him, which after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." By such Scriptural exhortations and instructions, fervently employed, especially by such awakening and alarming passages as the above, being fervently and pointedly applied, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the wise and faithful Wesley, with others in *their day*; and other similar, zealous and able watchmen and leaders on the walls of Zion, in several previous ages, were honored and blessed,

in being made the instruments of great and true revivals of Scriptural and Spiritual religion. Similar revivals, and a permanent increase of members, and of piety and purity of conduct in the Churches, by the employment of the like means, would, undoubtedly, often, if not always follow.

Judging by the conduct of many persons in Church fellowship, and that of the great body of those who are merely attendants on the religious services, there seems to be a very general and erroneous opinion, that the strict requisitions and precepts of the Scriptures are not in these days of advanced civilization and intellectual attainments and knowledge, as obligatory, and as precisely to be carried out in practice as in the early ages of Christianity. This is an utterly false—and if persisted in—a most ruinous idea. None of the improvements just mentioned, nor any increase in scientific discoveries—general or particular—or advances in the means of conducting *secular affairs*, can be allowed to have any influence, or effect, in weakening the authority or obligations of the Scripture standard of our holy religion. It has always been of the same inflexible nature, as Scripturally described, as free of any change, as to human opinions or affairs, as is the character of the immutable and holy and glorious Author of those Oracles, of wisdom, truth, and righteousness. Those infallible mental and spiritual lights he has in mercy given, to serve without change, for all people, and in all conditions of life, to the end of time. Some, or many, in their impiety and presumption, may talk of the “advanced spirit of the present age;” and of different requirements *now*, as to religious views and faith and practice, but all this is only one of the numerous proofs of a great and grievous defect as to true Scriptural knowledge and Christian faith and morals. The Scriptures give the most solemn warning and prohibition regarding any such ungodly and presumptuous thoughts or actions, by declaring: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;” “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in them.” The infinitely wise and eternally glorious Majesty of heaven has declared, that He “changeth not;” that “with Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning;” and that “His word abideth forever.” The Canon of Scripture revelation, for man’s faith and duty, was finally closed more than *eighteen hundred years past*, to serve to the end of time. No further written revelation has been

promised, or will ever be given. The same divine and thorough change in man's native sinful state; the same obligations and duties of faith, love, worship and obedience, towards God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; the same love and other graces and duties towards our fellow men; the same preparation of *holiness* for the future kingdom of glory and happiness, as set forth in the Scriptures, are now as absolutely requisite as in the first, or any other age of Christianity, and will so remain until the close of this world's history. The following comprehensive commands, and all other divine injunctions and requirements will never be relaxed in force or obligation: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve;" "Repent and believe the Gospel;" "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;" "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only;" "Be ye holy for I am holy."

The church of the faithful and finally saved,—the bride of the Lamb,—her Saviour and King,—will be presented unto him "in raiment of needle work," every grace and holy and lovely disposition having been patiently and perseveringly fashioned and completed according to the divine pattern, and her whole person, as Scripturally described, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" the immortal spirit having, through heavenly influence, been thoroughly created anew in that holy and happy image in which it was first formed, and *now* united to a glorified body. There must of necessity be such a perfect renovation, for these redeemed and saved spirits, with the innumerable company of the angelic orders, who never sinned, will forever dwell in the presence and under the guidance and favour of the infinitely Holy One "who sitteth on the throne," and of the equally Holy Redeemer and King of Saints.

In that region of glory there will, undoubtedly, be increasing knowledge and happiness, but there is nothing in Scripture to show that there will be any increase in *holiness*, for that would imply that there had been a previous defect in that essential quality.

In drawing to a conclusion the writer may say, that very pro-

bably some of the *indolent or double minded seekers and professors* previously described, will criticise and cavil at this discourse, for being, in their opinion, overloaded with passages of Scripture. These persons would like to hear of a God and His religion not so holy and precisely demanding as the Scriptures exhibit, though they would not venture plainly to say it. Without consulting those inspired oracles, they have formed in their own minds some such ideas of the character of the Deity as will accord with the self-devised and complacent standard of their own religious opinions and moral conduct; and what the requirements of his religion are, or ought to be, so as to be in harmony with the scientific knowledge and various discoveries and improvements of the present age. This is the delusion of such persons, and, therefore, it is not likely they will care to hear much, but as little as possible, of the threatenings of Scripture against all sin and vanity and folly; and its strict and inflexible requirements of entire devotedness to God, and perfect *holiness of heart and life*. Accordingly, they like best those discourses and addresses,—much too common in the present day,—which give merely a scrap of Scripture as a customary *heading*, and then, with *flourishing action*, the sensational sentiments of the man's own composition, and his flowing and soothing or otherwise pleasing utterances. All this they will doubtless prefer to that style of religious teaching which, in a considerable degree, was formerly observed, especially in the Presbyterian Ministry, of citing and explaining Scripture, in support of every position and sentiment advanced, thus, as Scripturally required, “comparing spiritual things with spirituals,” that the people might be fully instructed and brought to understand and remember Scripture truth, and have it established in their minds and hearts as the *only standard of their faith and practice*. This style, however, would not be acceptable to vast numbers of religious professors and others in the present age, who, as Scripture describes, have “itching ears,” and like the Athenians of old, desire always “to hear some new thing.” They much prefer the exciting and pleasant addresses which are given by such men as the famous Henry Ward Beecher, who so *delights* his numerous and *applauding* hearers of the renowned Plymouth Church. “Lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.” Those *self-deceivers* will seldom be found at a customary or ordinary week-night

prayer meeting, but will gladly crowd to a *Public Hall Lecture* on any *Secular* subject either by *Minister* or *Layman*. The Scripture teaching previously mentioned, giving a full exposition and application of the word of the eternal and glorious God, is in direct contrast with all those delusions and inconsistencies, and perfectly accords with the following and numerous other portions of those divine and authoritative oracles of truth and righteousness :—* “What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”—“The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”—“Preach the word.”—“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”—The highly inspired and faithful Paul affirmed,—“I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”—The Lord has said,—“To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.”—“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

*Jer. 23. Heb. 4-5 Tim. 4-Math. 28-Acts 20-Isas 66-Mic. 2-1 Pet. 1.

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